

a-side

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by [calciseptine](#)

Summary

"Stan kissed me," Ford blurts.

Notes

Kami reblogged [this gif set](#) and I am weak, okay, *weak*.

The moment he is safely hidden from the world, down in the half-finished McGucket family basement, Ford turns to his lab partner turned best friend and blurts, "Stan kissed me."

It is a heavy admission for a variety of reasons. On his way over, Ford had frantically created a mental list of these reasons in an attempt to sort through the jumbled mess of his thoughts. If he were to write that list down, it would perhaps look like this:

- Stan is heterosexual
 - he has had several relationships with women (i.e., Carla, Marilyn, and Darlene)
 - the dirty magazines stuffed underneath his mattress are geared towards straight men
 - has never displayed any attraction towards the same gender
 - is probably a zero on the Kinsey scale
- Ford and Stan are twin brothers
 - Ford assumes that Stan shares society's general attitude towards incest
 - Stan would probably react with disgust, revulsion, fear, etc. if Ford brought it up
- Ford has had a hopelessly embarrassing crush on Stan since sophomore year
 - he has tried to ignore it and failed miserably
 - he has resigned himself to a lifetime of pining
 - or however long it takes him to fall out of love
 - ... okay, a lifetime of pining
 - the normally apathetic universe must seriously hate him
 - and how has Stan not noticed, Ford is *not* subtle
- Ford has never—not once in his 17.6 years of existence—been kissed

As Ford's closest friend, Fiddleford knows and keeps all of these secrets. He has always accepted Ford and, to his credit, has never judged Ford for what others would. This is probably why all he does is blink at Ford's flustered exclamation, pause the video game he had been playing, and slowly reiterate, "Stanley... kissed you?"

"Yeah," Ford confirms, white-knuckling the frayed strap of his messenger bag. "After calc."

Ford's advanced placement calculus class was his last class of day, letting out at two-fifty on the dot, Monday through Friday. Stan had been waiting for Ford at their shared locker; his broad back was slumped casually against the old recycled steel and he had been playing a mindless game on his battered cellphone. He smiled at Ford when he approached, big and guileless, and slung one of his burly arms around Ford's shoulders in greeting.

This was normal. Ford and Stan often spent the forty minutes between the end of the school day and their respective club activities together. When it was warm enough—as it had been, for an early November afternoon—they would sit in the El Diablo, complaining to each other about coursework (Ford) or trying to covertly smoke a cigarette (Stan). It was the only time of day that they did not share with anyone else, and Ford hoarded those moments greedily.

"So Stanley kissed you," Fiddleford establishes. "And then...?"

The kiss had been quick and unexpected. Stan had just blown his last lungful of smoke out the cracked window—had just snubbed the butt of his cigarette out in the dusty ashtray—had just looked up, caught Ford's lingering gaze, and—

Stan's mouth touched Ford's mouth, chaste but firm. The rush of contact crackled down Ford's spine like a golden firework and Ford gasped lightly at the unexpected sensation. The kiss only lasted for a fraction of a moment, for the brief but unmistakable space of a heartbeat, before Stan pulled gently away. Ford's eyes fluttered back open at the loss of Stan's touch—he had not realized he had closed them—and, as he looked into Stan's warm brown eyes, Ford quietly whispered the first thing that came to mind.

"Hang on a tick," Fiddleford interrupts, raising one hand with the palm faced out. "Stanley finally kisses ya, and ya—ya thank 'im?"

"I know it wasn't my finest moment, okay?" Ford snaps, more embarrassed than angry. The heat of his blush feels like an unstoppable fire burning on his cheeks, on his throat, and on his ears. "I just—I had to say *something*!"

"At least ya were polite about it," Fiddleford assuages, absently scratching the wiry hairs that bloom like fluffy dandelions on his chin. Then, with some curiosity, he asks, "What did Stanley say?"

"Huh?"

"Stanley," Fiddleford drawls though not unkindly. "After ya thanked 'im. What did he say?"

In truth, Stan did not have the chance to say anything. Humiliation had seized Ford an instant after the words left his mouth—he had just *thanked* his *twin brother* for kissing him—and adrenaline born of terror burst into his blood. His heart hammered in his chest. He stuttered out a non-specific excuse about having a lot of homework, fumbled with the door latch, grabbed his heavy messenger bag, and fled. The air outside the car was cold compared to the warmth inside the El Diablo and it felt like a bucket of ice water had been dumped over Ford's head and shoulders.

Ford had made it halfway across the school parking lot before the masochistic need to look back overwhelmed his flight response. Clutching his bag to his chest, he stopped and glanced over his shoulder. The driver's side door of the El Diablo had been flung wide open, but Stan was frozen halfway out of the car, one steadying hand on the steel frame while the other was buried in the tangle of his slicked back hair. The distance made it difficult to determine whether Stan's gaze was downcast or if Stan was watching Ford flee a coward.

"I didn't know what else to do," Ford confesses, hunching his shoulders like he had when he turned from Stan a second time. "I just—I never thought—you know? The evidence—"

"Love ain't no science, Stanford," says Fiddleford, his voice gentle. "Evidence and logic—it don't have no place in the heart."

Ford knows this all too well. He has, after all, been stupidly gone for Stan since they were fifteen, when Stan fell asleep against Ford's side halfway through the extended version of

Return of the King. Stan's breath had been slow and damp against the side of Ford's neck. The swell of exasperated affection Ford felt when Stan drooled on him was the proverbial last straw that broke the back of Ford's denial; no matter how illogical it was, Ford could no longer deny that his feelings for Stan were more than platonic.

"I know—I *know* it doesn't—I just—" Ford feels a familiar and terrible pressure behind his eyes. His words are choked. "But what if I—what if I messed up?"

"Then you and Stanley will work it out." Fiddleford shrugs nonchalantly, as though there is no other option. "You two are closer than a couple o' peas in a pod. Kiss or no kiss, nothin's gonna get in the way of that. Yer just confused, and yer head's a mess—but that's why yer here, ain't it? To get sorted?"

"Maybe?" Ford had run to the McGucket house because Fiddleford was the only person Ford could talk to without censure; the fact that his house was less than half a mile away from their high school was an added bonus. "I guess I'm not sure of anything right now."

"Well, I don't know about that." Fiddleford smiles wryly at Ford's and makes a wide, ambiguous gesture with his controller. "I'm pretty dang sure that I can still beat yer ass at Mario Kart."

The bet is an unsubtle attempt at distraction. Ford could ignore it and continue to overthink the situation—a character flaw Ford is keenly aware of yet cannot overcome—or he could give into the desire to shove his anxiety into the dark corner of his mind and deal with it later. Ford knows that Fiddleford will go along with whichever decision Ford makes. Unsurprisingly, this knowledge that makes it easy for Ford to choose the latter option; to remove the armor of his messenger bag; to accept the second controller; and to plop down on the sagging couch cushions next to the best friend he ever could have asked for.

"You're on, McGucket," Ford declares—and if Fiddleford turns away so Ford can rub his knuckles against his damp eyes and take a deep, fortifying breath, neither of them say anything about it.

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